

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

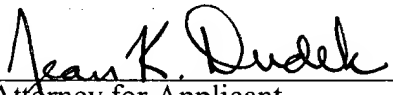
Claims 3 and 8-11 are pending in the application, with Claim 8 being the only independent claim. Claims 10 and 11 are withdrawn from consideration, but are amended to depend from Claim 8. Claims 1, 7 and 12 are cancelled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claim 8, which has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter, is amended herein to be in independent form. Claims 3 and 9 are amended in view of the cancellation of Claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claims 1, 3, 7, 9 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Saito et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,037,050). Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, to expedite prosecution, these claims are cancelled or amended to depend from Claim 8. It is submitted that the rejection therefore is moot and should be withdrawn.

It is submitted that Saito, et al. does not teach or suggest the features of the present invention as recited in independent Claim 8, and that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claim 8. The dependent claims are allowable for the same reasons as independent Claim 8, as well as for the patentable features recited therein. Individual consideration of the dependent claims, and rejoinder of withdrawn Claims 10 and 11, are respectfully solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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